



**College of Education and Human Development
Division of Special Education and disAbility Research**

Summer 2015

EDSE 590 B02: Special Education Research

CRN: 41503, 3 - Credits

Instructor: Mr. Todd Johnson	Meeting Dates: 6/1/2015 - 7/23/2015
Phone:	Meeting Day(s): Mondays, Wednesdays
E-Mail: tjohnsob@gmu.edu	Meeting Time(s): 4:30 pm-7:10 pm
Office Hours:	Meeting Location: Fairfax KH 102

***Note:** This syllabus may change according to class needs. Students will be advised of any changes immediately through George Mason e-mail and/or through Blackboard.*

Course Description

Describes fundamental concepts and practices in educational research in special education. Covers specific applications of educational research methods to problems in special education. Emphasizes review and critique of special education research, and applied classroom research for teachers.

Prerequisite(s): None

Co-requisite(s): None

Advising Contact Information

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. Mason M.Ed. and Certificate students should contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703) 993-3670 for assistance. All other students should refer to their faculty advisor.

Nature of Course Delivery

Learning activities include the following:

1. Class lecture and discussion

2. Application activities
3. Small group activities and assignments
4. Video and other media supports
5. Research and presentation activities
6. Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard

Learner Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and understand different methods of educational research suitable for different research purposes in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of quantitative experimental and quasi-experimental research in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of survey research in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of single subject research in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of qualitative research in special education.
- Critically evaluate education research and describe implications for educational practice.

Required Textbooks

McMillan, J.H. (2015). *Fundamentals of educational research* (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Digital Library

Effective summer 2015, the Division of Special Education and disAbility Research will discontinue the use of the Pearson Digital Library. No further registrations will be accepted. Students who hold current subscriptions will continue to have access to the library for the remainder of their subscription time. However, no further updates will be made to the digital library. During this time, should a textbook be revised or a new book is adopted for a class where the text is included in the digital library, Pearson will have options available to you and will provide you with an individual e-text or, if there is no e-text, a printed copy. Students, who have purchased a 3-year subscription directly through Pearson Education, will also have an option to obtain a prorated refund. However, 3-year subscription access cards purchased via the GMU bookstore will need to speak with a George Mason Bookstore Representative. Please be aware that the issuance of a refund, in this case, is at the discretion of the George Mason bookstore. Concerns or questions may be directed to Molly Haines at Molly.Haines@pearson.com.

Recommended Textbooks

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. **(make sure it is the second printing)**

Required Resources

Blackboard (Bb) will be used to post important information for this course. Plan to access the Bb site several times per week; announcements and resources are posted on the Bb site in between class sessions. You are responsible for accessing the materials – for printed copies, etc. prior to class. You will use the site: <http://courses.gmu.edu> and click the Login tab. Your Login and password is the same as your George Mason e-mail login. Once you enter, select the EDSE 590 course. The first night of class all handouts will be provided. After the first night, any handouts that will be needed will be posted within 24 hours of the next class. Students are responsible for downloading these handouts or printing hard copies for use in class from the second class onwards.

Additional Readings

Other readings as assigned by the instructor.

Course Relationships to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Masters in Special Education Program. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization. The CEC standards that will be addressed in this class include Standard 4: Instructional Strategies and Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice.

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- c. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- d. The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- e. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].

f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

g. The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

CORE VALUES COMMITMENT

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. [See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>]

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>]

Course Policies & Expectations

Attendance.

Students are expected to attend **all** classes, arrive on time, remain in class for the duration of each session, demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom, and complete all assignments with professional quality and in a timely manner. When absence from class is unavoidable, it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and lecture details from another student (it is recommended that you have two colleagues in the course for this). Please be sure to notify the classmate(s) in sufficient time for them to be of assistance for you.

Please notify the Instructor about absences in advance or within 24 hours after an absence. Be aware **any points earned for participation in class activities, during a time of absence, will not be earned and cannot be made up.**

If you need to miss, for any reason, more than two class sessions, contact the Instructor immediately (within 48 hours) with notification of when your course withdrawal will be completed. If you realize after the first class session that this course's requirements are not a match for you for this semester, process your withdrawal immediately (within 48 hours) and notify the Instructor at the same time.

- The use of electronic devices that produce sound or otherwise interfere with the learning of others (such as cell phones, pagers, etc.) is prohibited during class. Please turn these devices off or to vibrate before the start of class.
- **Computers may be used to take notes during class, but they may not be used for internet exploration or other non-class activities during class time.**

Late Work.

To successfully complete this course, students need to adhere to the due dates for specific readings and assignments to be completed. Full earned credit for assignments turned in on time. Anticipate point deductions for late work. For example, for every 24-hour period that an assignment is late, a 5% point deduction will occur.

TaskStream Submission

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, (*NO ASSESSMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE*) (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in TaskStream. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete(IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

If you have never used TaskStream before, you **MUST** use the login and password information that has been created for you. This information is distributed to students through GMU email, so it is very important that you set up your GMU email. For more TaskStream information, go to <http://cehd.gmu.edu/api/taskstream>.

Grading Scale

A = 95-100%
A- = 90-94%
B+ = 87-89%
B = 80-86%
C+ = 77-79%
C = 70-76%
F = 69% and below

Assignments

Performance-based Assessment (TaskStream submission required).

There are no NCATE/TaskStream Assignments for this course.

Performance-based Common Assignments (No TaskStream submission required).

CITI Module Completion – Due June 8th (10 points)

The CITI Module involves the completion of GMU **Mandatory** Training for Persons Conducting Research Using Human Subjects that is accessed at <http://www.citiprogram.org>.

Seven learner modules in the Basic Course are required prior to conducting any research at Mason using human subjects. While your current research will be limited to work for course assignments, the awareness gained through the CITI modules are valuable for any researcher now and in the future. After completing the modules, copy the certificate of completion document and paste it in a Word document, then submit this document via the Assignments Tab in Blackboard.

Research Proposal Paper - Due July 22nd (35 points)

For the final assignment, students will develop a research question on a special education topic of their choice and design a research study using an appropriate methodology to answer their question. Though no data collection or analysis are required for this assignment, the research proposal should be sufficiently detailed that it could serve as a guide to carry out an actual study. The research proposal paper will utilize one of the research methodologies covered during the semester. The paper will be formatted according to the APA manual guidelines and include the following sections: literature review, methods (participants, measures, procedure), and validity and limitations. Papers will be approximately 8 to 10 pages in length.

Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review is to introduce the reader to the research question, strategically explore previous research in this area, and argue for the rationale of the present study. Students will cite a minimum of five original research articles published in peer reviewed journals in the literature review. Citations are limited to studies published in the last 10 years. The literature review should include the following components: a broad introduction to the research problem, a focused assessment and integration of previous research to provide justification for the present study, a statement of the research question(s), and research hypothesis. Students will be evaluated on clarity of written expression, strong justification of the significance of the research problem, thorough assessment of published research with strong integration of the research to establish a foundation for the proposed study, and strength of research questions according to the criteria established by McMillan.

Methods

The methods sections will contain the following subsections: participants, measures, and procedure.

The participants section should include (a) a description of the population being examined, (b) a plan for selecting the sample from the population, (c) a rationale or justification of why the sampling method was selected, and (d) a hypothetical description of the participants selected. The description of the participants should include demographic data relevant to the proposed study.

The measures section will describe the key variables examined in your research and the materials or measures used to collect data on these variables. The description of the variables will contain both conceptual and operational definitions and specify both dependent and independent variables. In the description of the materials, APA formatted citations must be included for published measures.

The procedure section starts with a description of the specific type of research methodology to be utilized and a justification for this research methodology based on your

research question. The procedure section will thoroughly describe each step in the execution of the research. Summarize or paraphrase instructions (if applicable). The description of the procedure should be sufficient to allow for exact replication of the study. It may be necessary to include study materials as appendices. The procedure for conducting the study should follow the type of research methodology selected. Students will not be required to collect actual data, but a plan for conducting analysis of the data should be included. Students will be evaluated on the strength of the experimental design.

Validity, Limitations, and Anticipated Results

In this section, students must address potential threats to internal and external validity as described in McMillan. Students will describe how they will address these threats. The discussion of validity should be specific to the type of research methodology selected. The student must also address the limitations of the current study and provide recommendations for future research that would address these limitations. The paper will conclude with a statement of the predicted results.

Scoring Rubric

A detailed scoring rubric will be provided by the instructor on the BlackBoard site. Work will be evaluated on content, writing style, and adherence to APA formatting standards.

Proposal Paper PowerPoint Presentation – Due July 22nd (5 points)

As a culmination of the proposal paper, students will offer a clear and well-prepared PowerPoint presentation. The presentation should encompass the major elements of the student's paper, display information clearly and creatively, and be well-organized. To illustrate key content students can incorporate enlarged text, graphics, charts, and photos (as long as the students have a release for the photos). Students should be prepared to answer questions posed by class peers and the instructor during the PowerPoint presentation session. Students should be prepared to give an overview of their paper for approximately 15-20 minutes, using their PowerPoint as their visual for their presentation.

Other Assignments.

Article Analyses Papers Due June 29th & July 8th (12 points each)

Each student is required to submit two article analysis papers during the course of the semester. The purpose of this assignment is for students to learn to assess and critique the quality of published educational research and to communicate a summary of the most pertinent information.

Students will select a research article published in the last 5 years from a peer-reviewed academic journal. Students may use articles that will be included in the literature review for their final research paper. The first article analysis paper will be based on an article utilizing quantitative methodology. The second article analysis paper will be based on a qualitative methodology. Article analysis papers based on the incorrect methodology will not be accepted for credit. Students are encouraged to seek approval from the instructor for their chosen articles.

The paper will include a summary of the research problem, participants, experimental methodology, and findings (approximately 3 pages). This summary will be followed by a critique of the researcher's execution of the experimental methodology (approximately 2 pages). The specific focus of the critique will depend on the selected article. Students should refer to McMillan's guidelines for assessing published research. For example, the critique may examine several of the following elements:

- The fit between the research problem and the research methodology or design
- Appropriate or inappropriate use of data collection instruments
- The author's attention to rigorous data collection procedures and data analysis
- Apparent flaws in execution of the research
- Quality of sampling procedure, description of participants or inclusion criteria for participants

participants

Papers will be evaluated on selection of an appropriate research article, clarity of written expression, demonstration of understanding of the research methodology and execution, thorough assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the article, and correct usage of APA formatting.

Paper Format:

- APA formatted cover sheet
- Article assessment (5 pages)
- APA formatted reference page

Reading Assessments – *Coinciding with chapter reading due dates - for all but last 3 classes* (2 points per class for a total of 26 points)

Quizzes that cover course content will be administered as in-class assessments. The assessment format may include multiple choice and/or short answer questions on content, or essay questions where students will be expected to apply content to given scenarios. In some cases in-class projects or homework assignments will be substituted for quizzes. Each reading assessment will be worth 3 points.

Course Requirements Evaluation	
Assignment	Points Earned/Total Points
1. Reading Assessments (2 points per 13 class meetings)	/26
2. CITI Module Completion	/10

3. Quantitative Article Analysis	/12
4. Qualitative Article Analysis	/12
5. Research Proposal Paper	/35
4. Proposal Presentation	/5
Total # of points earned	/100

Schedule

COURSE SCHEDULE		
Date	Topics	Reading & Assignments Due (all chapters will be assessed on the date they are due to be read)
6/1	Introductions Syllabus and Course Expectations Introduction to Research in Special Education Ethical Issues, Principles, and Practices	
6/3	Research Problems and Questions Participants and Sampling	Read: Chapters 3 & 5
6/8	Locating and Reviewing Related Literature	Read: Chapter 4 Due: CITI Module
6/10	Foundations of Educational Measurement	Read: Chapters 6
6/15	Quantitative Data Collection Techniques	Read: Chapter 7

6/17	Nonexperimental Quantitative Research Designs	Read: Chapter 8
6/22	Experimental Research Designs	Read: Chapters 9
6/24	Understanding Statistical Inferences	Read: Chapter 10
6/29	Qualitative Research Design	Read: Chapter 11 Due: Quantitative Article Review
7/1	Qualitative Data Collection, Analysis, and Credibility	Read: Chapters 12
7/6	Mixed Methods Design	Read: Chapter 13
7/8	Action Research	Read: Chapter 14 Due: Qualitative Article Review
7/13	Discussion and Conclusions	Read: Chapter 15
7/15	Summary of Learning Review Expectations for Research Proposal Paper and Presentation	
7/20	No formal class meeting: Independent study for final project.	
7/22	Case Study Presentations Course Evaluations	Due: Proposal Presentations <u>Due: Research Proposal Paper</u>